# Northeast Nature Notes



News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • July/August/September 2013

### **Get Outside** Children need nature

rowing up I had the good fortune to live a block away from Chautaugua Park, a magnificent place to explore and imagine while playing with neighborhood friends in the stream and among the oaks, maples and hickories. There was even a small outdoor amphitheater where we put on performances for our parents. Today the stage is gone and the playground equipment has been updated. Now I take my grandchildren there to play and enjoy nature.

Oh, for the good old days when we played and explored outside with abandon, only coming inside when we were hungry or mom gave a whistle. In the neighborhood at night we played games like Kick the Can or Flashlight Tag or Sardines. Playing in the dark added an element of excitement and adventure. The days of my free-ranging childhood in the 1950s are gone.

Today's kids spend less time in the outdoors than 20 years ago. Research supports this. In a typical week, only 6% of children ages 9-13 play outside on their own. (Children & Nature Network, 2008). Today, kids 8-18 years old devote an average of 7 hours and 38 minutes using entertainment media in a typical day (more than 53 hours a week). (Kaiser Family Foundation)

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, sixty minutes of daily unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health. Guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education suggests this activity has long-term health benefits, like help- Elementary school campers worked ing to ward off childhood obesity and improving their psychological well-being.

Childhood gives us the opportunity to develop faculties and skills that will be crucial to our becoming effective and contributing members of society as adults. Henry David Thoreau said, "The more slowly trees grow at first, the sounder they are at the core, and I think the same is true of human beings."

Here at the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) in Kirksville we have just finished our Day Camp which was



together to build a shelter in the forest.

focused on the children's book Hatchet by Gary Paulsen. Kids ranging in age from 8-13 years roamed our area building shelter, starting fire with magnifying lenses or trying their hand using flint and steel, tasting wild edible plants, and fishing in the pond with stick poles they made. MDC is an excellent place to look for opportunities to get your kids outside exploring nature. Check out our website for conservation areas near you or activities featured at our office.

---Karen Armstrong, Education Consultant





Middle school campers split into two teams to build their shelters-all girls and all boys.

### **Northeast Regional Office**

3500 S. Baltimore, Kirksville, MO 63501 • mdc.mo.gov/node/279



The Northeast Regional Office and Interpretive Center is located just south of Kirksville on Hwy 63. Come inside to enjoy exhibits, attend programs, purchase permits, and pick up free conservation brochures. Head outside to walk the habitat trail or fish in the stocked pond.

#### HOURS:

Building: Monday-Friday, 8 AM-5 PM Trail and Pond: Daily, 4 AM-10 PM

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM: Programs are free. Call 660-785- 2420 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

#### Creature Feature Beaver Fever

July 10 • Wednesday • 3:30–4:30 PM No registration required (ages 7-12) We have a special guest coming to tell us what it takes to be a very successful beaver-Justin Beaver! Come meet the star of the show and see if you have what it takes to try the beaver lifestyle.

### **Conservation Keepers Wild Edibles 101**

July 20 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

No registration required (all ages)

How often do you wonder if the plants
that you see are edible? Find out how to
spot some common wild edibles (and
some to stay away from) so that you can
eat weeds for fun or survival!

### Knee High Naturalists Itchy, Itchy

July 22 • Monday • 10:30–11:30 AM Registration required (ages 3-6)
Poison ivy is a common plant in Missouri, and it can sure make you feel miserable.
We'll learn all about it so we can stay away from this itchy, itchy plant!

#### Creature Feature Naturally Annoying

July 24 • Wednesday • 3:30–4:30 PM No registration required (ages 7-12) There's nothing better than a day spent exploring nature, but itchy bites, painful stings, and poison ivy rashes can ruin the adventure. When you can recognize these natural pests, you can also avoid them!

#### **August Events**

### Knee High Naturalists Hole-y Trees!

August 5 • Monday • 10:30–11:30 AM *No registration required (ages 3-6)* What's black, white, and red and likes to drill holes? A woodpecker! Find out with us why they make so many holes in the trees.

### Creature Feature Explore!

August 14 • Wednesday • 3:30–4:30 PM

No registration required (ages 7-12)
Are your senses up to the challenge?
Smell, feel, look, and listen to find
natural wonders on the habitat trail.



**July Events** 

#### Knee High Naturalists Bad Bugs

July 8 • Monday • 10:30–11:30 AM No registration required (ages 3-6) Exploring nature is fun, but sometimes we find critters that aren't so friendly. Learn to spot those "bad bugs" and some ways to keep them away from you.



Yellow wood sorrel is a common wild edible found in yards and fields. The flowers, leaves, and fruit make a nice snack to nibble on during your outdoor adventures. Just be careful not to overdo it-wood sorrels contain oxalic acid, which can cause stomach cramps if you eat too much.

### **Northeast Regional Office**

3500 S. Baltimore, Kirksville, MO 63501 • mdc.mo.gov/node/279

#### **Conservation Keepers Naturally Annoying**

August 17 • Saturday • 1-2 PM *No registration required (all ages)* There's nothing better than a day spent exploring nature, but itchy bites, painful stings, and poison ivy rashes can ruin the adventure. When you can recognize these natural pests, you can also avoid them!

#### **Knee High Naturalists** Scales, Slime, and Gills

August 19 • Monday • 10:30-11:30 AM *No registration required (ages 3-6)* It drinks constantly but is never thirsty. It gets oxygen without breathing air. How can a fish live underwater?

#### **Creature Feature** Flower Power

August 28 • Wednesday • 3:30-4:30 PM

*No registration required (ages 7-12)* We see them as dainty, delicate, or beautiful, but wildflowers are so much more. Discover the power of flowers with us!

#### **September Events**

#### **Knee High Naturalists Explore!**

September 9 • Monday • 10:30-11:30 AM

*No registration required (ages 3-6)* "In all things of nature, there is something of the marvelous."-Aristotle Explore and discover the marvels of nature on our sensory hike.



#### **Creature Feature Grow With the Flow**

September 11 • Wednesday • 3:30-4:30 PM

*No registration required (ages 7-12)* From the tiniest microhabitat to the entire solar system, everything is connected by the movement of energy. How does the energy flow in Missouri's ecosystems?

#### **Conservation Keepers** Nature Journaling

September 21 • Saturday • 1–2 PM *No registration required (all ages)* Keeping a nature journal focuses your senses as you record details of what you see and hear during your explorations. Learn some techniques and get some practice with us.



#### **Knee High Naturalists** The Giving Tree

September 23 • Monday • 10:30-11:30 AM

No registration required (ages 3-6) It's story time as we read "The Giving Tree" and find out what we use that comes from trees.

#### **Creature Feature Migration Mania**

September 25 • Wednesday • 3:30-

*No registration required (ages 7-12)* Birds, bats, and even butterflies migrate long distances. Discover why and how



## **HUNTER EDUCATION**



Register online for all Hunter Education courses at mdc. mo.gov/node/3722

A complete listing of courses is also included on this website.

These free 10-hour courses are required for anyone born on or after January 1, 1967, who wants to hunt with firearms in Missouri. Students ages 11 and up must pass a test at the end of the course to be certified. Students under 15 years old must be accompanied by an adult and show proof of age. If you have any previous Missouri hunting or fishing permits, or a Missouri Conservation Heritage Card, bring them to class.

# **Educator's Corner**

#### **Bees Are Back**

For some time now, visitors to the Northeast Regional Office have seen an empty container instead of our once thriving beehive. Last year's hot, dry weather wiped out the entire population of bees in a short time, and we've struggled to find success with new bees and new queens. Our first group of bees for this year never bonded with their queen, so the colony was unable to grow.

An opportunity came for us to take another chance at having a successful observation hive this year, and we took it. We now have a community of honeybees who are working hard to make honey and care for the larva curled up in the cells of the hive. You can now view these amazing insects as they fly in and out hunting for nectar, returning with loads of pollen, building up new cells for the hive and filling them with honey.

Along with our new healthy hive, we have a new native wildflower garden just outside of the bird-viewing windows. The plants in the garden will provide a food source for honeybees and native bees. They also enhance the bird viewing experience as the flowers open and spread to fill the view with bursts of color.

Visit the office to discover more about bees and native gardening!



# **Ask the Naturalist**

#### I found this spider. What is it? - Eric McBee

I love guestions like this! I get a chance to experience someone's curiosity, and I also get to either share something I know or to learn something new. Whether it's an insect, a snake, a spider, or pretty much any animal or plant that you're curious about, someone at our office will most likely be able to identify it. It may take us some time, but with good pictures or a specimen we will do our best.

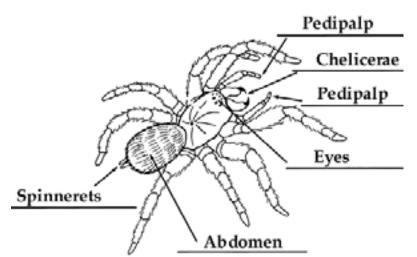
One of the first steps in identification is to make note of any distinguishing characteristics. The color pattern of white spots on this spider's abdomen seemed to be a good starting point. I searched for black spiders with white-spotted abdomens and very quickly found something that looked a lot like my specimen. It was called a daring jumping spider, *Phidippus audax*.



Looking like it isn't enough for a good ID, though. On top of that, the spider did not match my idea of a jumping spider. They are generally very fuzzy (I prefer fuzzy to hairy because only mammals have actual hair). With my doubts about the identification, I wanted something more definite.

After a little more reading, I found that the daring jumping spider had another very distinctive characteristic. This spider has iridescent blue or green chelicerae, mouthparts that connect to the fangs. I was sure I would have noticed that right away. I was ready to start all over again, but decided to double-check. As I leaned in to take a closer look, the spider spread its pedipalps wide and I got a clear view of its bright green mouthparts. Without a doubt, I had found the right name for this arachnid!

-Amanda Moore, Naturalist





Top: Daring jumping spider with pedipalps covering chelicerae. Above: Pedipalps apart, showing green chelicerae.

Left: Spider anatomy

#### **Fun and Free**

Stop by the MDC Northeast Regional Office in Kirksville during office hours to check out a Discover Nature backpack. These backpacks give you a self-guided tour of the natural world as you walk the habitat trail.

Backpacks can be checked out at the front desk. Each backpack is loaded with tools and information to enhance your experience, from magnifiers and measuring tapes to field guides and a nature journal.



Northeast Nature Notes is available by mail, e-mail, and on the MDC website.

To be added to the mail or e-mail registry, or to switch from one to the other, please contact Amanda Moore at amanda.moore@mdc.mo.gov or call 660-785-2420.

The online version of the newsletter is available at mdc.mo.gov/node/17875.

A full event calendar for the Northeast region is also available on the MDC website.

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society, where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not Man the less, but Nature more.
-Lord Byron



# CONSERVATION KEEPERS: WILD EDIBLES 101



Saturday, July 20 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. MDC Northeast Regional Office

How often do wonder if the plants that you see on your nature walks are edible? Join us for a program that will help you spot some common wild edibles so that you can eat the weeds for fun or for survival!

Call Amanda Moore at (660) 785-2420 for details.

#### discover nature programs . . .

- Help Missourians discover and explore nature
- Provide expert instruction and hands-on activities
- · Are available statewid







#### CONSERVATION KEEPERS: NATURALLY ANNOYING



Saturday, August 17 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. MDC Northeast Regional Office

Exploring nature can be peaceful, relaxing, and even adventurous, but itchy bites, painful stings, and poison ivy rashes can ruin your outdoor experiences. When you can recognize these natural pests, you can also avoid them. Join us to get tips and identification practice for naturally annoying wildlife.

Call Amanda Moore at (660) 785-2420 for details.

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www.MissouriConservation.org

